Transitions for Tomorrow: An Evidence-Based Review of Post-Secondary Transition Planning for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Authors: Julie Bardenwerper, James Gillette, Elizabeth Luk, Hilary Moser, & Alanna Raffel
Faculty advisor: Teal Benevides, MS, OTR/L
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy degree at Thomas Jefferson University

Objectives of Presentation:
- *Examine* the gap in services regarding post-secondary transition planning for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- *Identify* the methods used to gather relevant evidence to answer the clinical question
- *Describe* available evidence regarding best practice transition planning for individuals with ASD
- *Discuss* application of findings in practice

PICO or Clinical Question: What is the evidence on transition planning **(I)** for successful integration to post-secondary settings **(O)** for individuals with ASD **(P)**?

Methods:
- *Databases:* ERIC, Cochrane, PudMed, CINAHL
- *Search terms:* **(P):** Developmental disabil*, Autis*, Intellectual disabilit*, Children on the autism spectrum*, Special education*, Age out, **(I):** Occupational therap*, Transition*, Secondary transition*, Vocation* training, Work simulat*, **(O):** Community integration*, Employ*, Secondary education*, Community participation, Group home*, Outcome transition planning, College*, Universit*, Workshop*, Day program*, Social participation*
- *Total number of articles found*: 477   *Total number of articles synthesized*: 17
- *Inclusion:* Published within the last 12 years, peer-reviewed, English language, individuals with ASD and ranging from 12-30 years old, and transition from school to postsecondary settings
- *Exclusion*: Articles referring to educational systems outside of the US
- *Method of critique*: A primary and secondary critic completed all critiques to verify that the critiqued information was accurate. If conflicts arose during the critique process, final decisions were made through group consensus.
    - *Systematic review* - PRISMA Checklist (7)
    - *Quantitative studies* – Law and MacDermid form (4)
    - *Expert opinion*- A well-written expert opinion was defined as being written by authors with appropriate credentials, 30+ references cited, and use of valid peer-reviewed sources.

Results and Implications:
- **Themes**
    - ***Client-Centered Focus***

Age:	Most articles described a start age of 14-16 for transition planning. Two articles suggested that the transition process should begin even earlier.
Self-Advocacy: Strengths-Based: Family Involvement:	The articles emphasize that the ability to advocate for oneself is a critical aspect of the transition process. When interacting with and making decisions for clients, team members should focus on the clients' strengths. Family involvement also contributes to more successful transition outcomes. (5) and (9) are useful articles for understanding these themes and discuss specific programs and strategies.
Team:	Transition planning is designed as an interdisciplinary approach; however, there is a need for more occupational therapy representation in the literature.

   - ***Continuum of Care***

Work:	Post-secondary work sites should be contacted to make sure appropriate supports are established prior to the client's transition from high school. (10) and (6) are articles that describe methods for ensuring continuum of care at the work place.
School:	Similar to the continuum of care at work, supports should be in place for the client before he

	or she enters a post-secondary educational setting. (11) and (1) are articles that describe supports that may be needed once an individual transitions to a post-secondary academic setting. There is limited high-level evidence regarding continuum of care in post-secondary educational settings.

o **Skill Development**

Specific:	Literature identifies three types of skills required for successful transitions. Specific skills ("hard skills") are task-oriented and are needed to complete a particular job. General skills ("soft skills") are non-technical and are required for all post-secondary settings. Social skills refer to interpersonal communication necessary for successful integration.
General:	
Social:	

o ***Approaches to Skill Development and Skill Development Measures***

Community Experiences	Approaches were described to meet the needs of the clients and facilitate their learning of identified skills. (10), (8), and (3) are useful resources that provide information on interventions regarding these approaches. These articles include measurements used to track changes in overall performance and outcomes.
Interactive skill	
Instruction	
Auditory Processing	

Resources

1. Adreon, D., & Durocher, J. S. (2007). Evaluating the college transition needs of individuals with high-functioning autism spectrum disorders. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 42*(5), 271-279. doi: 10.1177/10534512070420050201
2. Cimera, E. (2009). Can community-based high school transition programs improve the cost-efficiency of supported employment? *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals,* 33(1), 4-12. doi: 10.1177/0885728809346959
3. Hagner, D., Kurts A., Cloutier, H., Arakelian, C., Arakelian, C., & May J. (2012). Outcomes of a family-centered transition process for students with autism spectrum disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities,* 27(1), 42-50. doi: 10.1177/1088357611430841
4. Law, M., Stewart, D., Pollock, N., Letts, L., Bosch, J., & Westmorland, M. (1998). Appendix A: Critical review form: Quantitative studies. In M. Law & J. MacDermid (Eds.), *Evidence-based rehabilitation: A guide to practice* (pp. 331-334). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK Incorporated.
5. Koheler P.D. & Field, S. (2003). Transition focus education: Foundation for the future. *Journal of Special Education,* 37(3), 174–183. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ785945.pdf
6. Lee, G. K., & Carter, E. W. (2012). Preparing transition-age students with high-functioning autism spectrum disorders for meaningful work. *Psychology in the Schools, 49*(10), 988-13; 1000. doi: 10.1002/pits.21651
7. Moher D., Liberati A., Tetzlaff J., & Altman D.G., The PRISMA Group (2009). *P*referred *R*eporting *I*tems for *S*ystematic Reviews and *M*eta-*A*nalyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(6): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097
8. Montgomery, J., Storey, K., Post, M., & Lemley, J. (2011). The use of auditory prompting systems for increasing independent performance of students with autism in employment training. *International Journal of Rehabilitation, 34*(4), 330-335. doi:10.1097/MRR.0b013e32834a8fa8; 10.1097/MRR.0b013e32834a8fa8
9. Wehman, P. (2013). Transition from school to work: Where are we and where do we need to go? *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals,* 36(1), 58-66. doi: 10.1177/2165143413482137
10. Wehman, P., Schall C., McDonnough, J. Molinelli, A., Riehle, E., Ham, W., & Thiss, W. (2012). Project SEARCH for youth with autism spectrum disorders: Increasing competitive employment on transition from high school. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions,* 15(3), 144–155. doi: 10.1177/1098300712459760
11. VanBergeijk, E., Klin, A., & Volkmar, F. (2008). Supporting more able students on the autism spectrum: College and beyond. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 38*(7), 1359-12; 1370. doi: 10.1007/s10803-007-0524-8

Please contact James Gillette for additional information at gillette.james@gmail.com.